

With nuclear weapons, Iran could blatantly sponsor the most horrific terrorist events, feeling itself immune from retaliation.

The Iranian regime could terrify its Muslim neighbors and interrupt their oil exports. Conversely, it could inspire Middle East States to develop their own nuclear weapons. If the Tehran regime got just a little bit crazier than they are, it could smuggle a weapon into the United States and then threaten to explode it if we did not change our policies.

Finally, if that regime were about to be overthrown, and many of us look forward to that day, it could use its nuclear weapons against its own people, or it could use them against Israel as a final parting act.

Ahmadinejad declared in one of his recent famous diatribes that the United States should bow down and surrender.

Mr. Amadinijad, we already have. Our unilateral concessions began in 1999 when we opened our markets to Iranian exports, not oil which we could use, but only the stuff Iran cannot sell elsewhere like caviar.

Since then we have acquiesced in World Bank loans to the Iranian Government. We allow corporations to do business in Iran through their foreign subsidiaries. And last year we opened the door to Iran's membership in the WTO. For 6 years, the Bush administration has violated U.S. law by refusing to apply the Iran-Libya Sanctions Acts to billions of dollars of investments in the Iranian oil sector. All this while energy sanctions were effective in changing Libya's behavior.

Most recently, Condoleezza Rice and President Bush personally approved a visa for a five-city U.S. propaganda tour by Amadinijad's predecessor, former Iranian President Khatami. Amazingly, the U.S. taxpayer picked up part of the tab for Khatami's terrorism promotion tour. We paid for the security. As you remember, the last time there were American officials in Iran, there wasn't much security and they were taken hostage and held for 44 days.

There is a certain symmetry to all this, Mr. Speaker. According to the 9/11 Commission, during the administration of Khatami, Iran used its taxpayer dollars to provide safe harbor and protection to al Qaeda terrorists. Now U.S. tax dollars are used to provide safe harbor and protection for Khatami.

The failure of this administration to persuade the U.N. Security Council, particularly Russia and China, to impose sanctions on Iran for developing nuclear weapons is the greatest diplomatic failure of our time. Why have they failed? Because they refuse the concept of linkage. We seek Russia's help on Iran while refusing to make the slightest concession on issues Russia cares about like Moldavia, Chechnya, Obkazia, any reasonable U.S. policy which subordinates these issues that are minor to us to the goal of preventing a nuclear Iran.

Likewise, we refuse to link how China deals with Iran with how we deal with China on trade issues, such as how we choose to respond to their legally questionable currency manipulations.

Mr. Speaker, the options are clear. We can use all our economic and diplomatic power, including linkage, to stop Amadinijad's nuclear weapon program, or we can bow down and surrender.

Actually, the Bush administration has embraced a third option. Talk tough, avoid effective action, especially linkage, and take solace in the fact that the policy failure will not become manifest and Iran will not develop and test a nuclear weapon until after 2008. Bush refuses linkage. We are doomed to a nuclear Iran.

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CONGRESSIONAL CONSTITUTION CAUCUS CONSTITUTION HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor tonight for our weekly Congressional Constitution Caucus Constitution Hour to honor the annual Constitution Day, September 17. September 17 marks the anniversary of the signing of our founding legal document, the U.S. Constitution.

On September 17, 1787, 39 revolutionary and visionary Founding Fathers changed the course of history and this country and the world, securing liberties and freedoms that centuries of civilization had only dreamed of before and that democracies around the world have tried to emulate ever since. I encourage all of my colleagues to use this occasion to remind us all and all Americans of the true intent of the U.S. Constitution and all the rights and the liberties that are guaranteed to them when our government was first formed. Today more than ever before these freedoms are too often encroached upon by every branch of government.

Unfortunately, for most Americans, the Constitution is nothing more than a historical document, really, too often cited, and cited inaccurately, and nearly always greatly misunderstood.

Still more unfortunate, this esteemed body and our Federal Government have lowered the standard of constitutional understanding and adherence, and so it is no wonder the general public has little interest or comprehension of the intent of our Nation's Founding Fathers. Just today, for example, if someone tuned in to see the discussion on C-SPAN of what was going on on the floor, the House was debating, as if, you might say, a school board was debating, for we were looking at legislation of how schools should be run with regard to their securities within their confines.

Thomas Jefferson was once asked the question, why is it that the Federal

Government does not regulate and promote schools throughout the country? And he answered the question by saying: Madam, we shall do so when the Constitution is amended to say that we have the right and constitutional power to do so. But until that time, we shall not.

Here in the House floor today, unfortunately, we were doing just that, acting as if this was one large super-school board for the entire 50 States of this country.

But we were happy to come to the floor, along with my colleague from Utah, earlier this evening and other members of the caucus to help reorient the conversation to the original beliefs of our Founding Fathers and purposes of our founding documents. I think we have become a society that has begun to take for granted our systems of self-government and our liberties and freedoms. You know, gone are the days of the tyrannical rulers that inspired patriots to dump tea in the Boston Harbor or to compel Patrick Henry to cry out, "Give me liberty or give me death," or motivated such important luminaries as General George Washington, who successfully led a patchwork of army of little resources and even less hope to take up arms against one of the mightiest armies in the world for their freedom.

As societies around the world are currently struggling to establish or maintain democracy as the true model of self-government, let us not forget the many rights that we possess and the single document that protects them.

So as we celebrate the anniversary of our signing of our Nation's most significant legal document, let us each and every one of us try to better familiarize ourselves with it. Highlighting and understanding what the Constitution actually says; what the intent of the authors actually was, and how it is now interpreted, stretched, or ignored will empower the public, like our forefathers once did, to stand up for their innate rights and to resist the growth of government at every level.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to let our rights slip away, but tremendously difficult to get them back ever again. The best weapons that we have against either of those things ever happening is to arm ourselves with the knowledge found in the United States Constitution.

And so I conclude as I had once before on this floor, to encourage this House to adopt legislation that is pending right now called the AMERICA Act, which is simply asking every Member of this body to on a yearly basis to simply read the Constitution, and their staffs as well. Let us start in this body to have an understanding of the Constitution and to share that belief with the American public as well.